

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-24 (canceled)

25. (previously presented) A method of harvesting a cutting from a plant comprising:

harvesting a cutting from a plant and

treating the harvested cutting with a hypersensitive response elicitor protein or polypeptide,

whereby said treating inhibits desiccation of the harvested cutting and enhances the longevity of flower blooms on the harvested cutting.

26. (original) The method of claim 25, wherein said treating comprises topically applying the hypersensitive response elicitor protein or polypeptide to the cutting.

27. (original) The method of claim 25, wherein the hypersensitive response elicitor protein or polypeptide is derived from a plant pathogen.

28. (original) The method of claim 27, wherein the plant pathogen is selected from the group consisting of *Erwinia*, *Pseudomonas*, *Ralstonia*, *Xanthomonas*, *Clavibacter*, and *Phytophthora*.

29. (previously presented) The method of claim 25, wherein the plant is a monocot or a dicot.

30. (original) The method of claim 25, wherein the cutting comprises a stem, a leaf, a flower, or combinations thereof.

31. (previously presented) A method of inhibiting desiccation of cuttings from plants comprising:

removing a cutting from a plant; and

treating the removed cutting with a hypersensitive response elicitor protein or polypeptide;

whereby said treating inhibits desiccation of the removed cutting.

32. (original) The method of claim 31, wherein said treating comprises topically applying the hypersensitive response elicitor protein or polypeptide to the cutting.

33. (original) The method of claim 31, wherein the hypersensitive response elicitor protein or polypeptide is derived from a plant pathogen.

34. (original) The method of claim 33, wherein the plant pathogen is selected from the group consisting of *Erwinia*, *Pseudomonas*, *Ralstonia*, *Xanthomonas*, *Clavibacter*, and *Phytophthora*.

35. (previously presented) The method of claim 31, wherein the plant is a monocot or a dicot.

36. (original) The method of claim 31, wherein the cutting comprises a stem, a leaf, a flower, or combinations thereof.

37. (previously presented) A cutting which has been removed from a plant, wherein the cutting has been treated with a hypersensitive response elicitor protein or polypeptide and wherein the cutting is characterized by greater resistance to desiccation as compared to an untreated cutting removed from the plant.

38. (original) The cutting according to claim 37, wherein the cutting comprises a stem, a leaf, a flower, or combinations thereof.

39. (original) The cutting of claim 37, wherein the hypersensitive response elicitor protein or polypeptide is derived from a plant pathogen.

40. (original) The cutting of claim 39, wherein the plant pathogen is selected from the group consisting of *Erwinia*, *Pseudomonas*, *Ralstonia*, *Xanthomonas*, *Clavibacter*, and *Phytophthora*.

41. (previously presented) The cutting of claim 37, wherein the plant is a monocot or a dicot.

42-80 (canceled)

81. (previously presented) A method of enhancing the longevity of flower blooms on plant cuttings, the method comprising:

harvesting from a plant a cutting that contains at least one flower; and
treating the harvested cutting with a hypersensitive response elicitor protein or polypeptide;

whereby said treating imparts to the harvested cutting enhanced longevity of flower blooms as compared to an untreated harvested cutting.

82. (previously presented) The method of claim 81, wherein said treating comprises topically applying the hypersensitive response elicitor to the plant.

83. (original) The method of claim 81, wherein the hypersensitive response elicitor protein or polypeptide is derived from a plant pathogen.

84. (original) The method of claim 83, wherein the plant pathogen is selected from the group consisting of *Erwinia*, *Pseudomonas*, *Ralstonia*, *Xanthomonas*, *Clavibacter*, and *Phytophthora*.

85. (previously presented) The method of claim 81, wherein the plant is a monocot or a dicot.

86-88 (canceled)

89. (previously presented) The method according to claim 25, wherein the plant is a floriculture crop.

90. (previously presented) The method according to claim 31, wherein the plant is a floriculture crop.

91. (previously presented) The cutting according to claim 37, wherein the plant is a floriculture crop.

92. (canceled)

93. (previously presented) The method according to claim 81, wherein the plant is a floriculture crop.

94-99 (canceled)

100. (new) The method of claim 25 further comprising exposing the harvested cutting to conditions that, in the absence of said treating, would cause desiccation of the harvested cutting.

101. (new) The method of claim 25 further comprising applying a hypersensitive response elicitor protein or polypeptide to the plant prior to harvesting the cutting from the plant.

102. (new) The method of claim 101 further comprising exposing the harvested cutting to conditions that, in the absence of said applying, would cause desiccation of the harvested cutting.

103. (new) The method of claim 31 further comprising exposing the removed cutting to conditions that, in the absence of said treating, would cause desiccation of the harvested cutting.

104. (new) The method of claim 31 further comprising applying a hypersensitive response elicitor protein or polypeptide to the plant prior to removing the cutting from the plant.

105. (new) The method of claim 104 further comprising exposing the removed cutting to conditions that, in the absence of said applying, would cause desiccation of the harvested cutting.

106. (new) The method of claim 81 further comprising exposing the harvested cutting to conditions that, in the absence of said treating, would cause desiccation of the harvested cutting.

107. (new) The method of claim 81 further comprising applying a hypersensitive response elicitor protein or polypeptide to the plant prior to harvesting the cutting from the plant.

108. (new) The method of claim 107 further comprising exposing the harvested cutting to conditions that, in the absence of said applying, would cause desiccation of the cutting or the at least one flower thereon.